478

My dear Sarah — Rome Jan. 11. 1824

I hope sincerely that you may not have any trouble with the picture which I now send, that you had with the last — that you will not have another occasion to say as you did then — Eye the Eye that was a regular sell down — I have stated in my last — that yet I might have deserved it — may I not? I have sent notice to Father about this picture — so that I trust it will be straight to your house and there will be no trouble about it —

I have been thinking my dear Sarah that if you could give me any idea what Sum I owe you it would be a source of comfort to me — by so making a calculation, for this year I am determined to be without owing a penny — If my Pictures do not sell I will work at any thing else until I have cleared off every debt possible and simple — not that I have it in my power now — for I am sadly behind — my journey to Venice and the two Pictures I have done there eaten into my present half year — but I have the greatest hope that my "Greek Shepherds" is sold — if so I may be able to discharge all — But my expences are great at Rome saving — sometimes it costs me £2 a day for a Model and this for 2 Months together — I reckon it may cost me 30 £ a year for Models — and paints 10 £ — my rent about 12 £ — thus that my expences have been considerably greater than at any other time because I have done so many things — so I think God that as much is spent — since I a large Room with by which with my Works — worth Copies — now this is better than money because I lay in a stock for all my future doings — Every one envies me the reputation I have made — and even the masters that I have now gone far beyond any Englishman now in Rome — and if my health holds I may hope for every

I wish instead of learning Latin you would learn to write plain and distinct English— I endeavour to teach you an example— but get both you and Tom send me such incoherent Epistles— that Shady is as bad as the Egyptian Hieroglyphics— You tell of Mrs Barter whose husband died on his passage from India— Then directly after you speak of being a great favorite with him and that he is teaching you Latin— I have no doubt that he is an Elegant Personage— but how am I to know at 15 hundred miles distance— Now pray do study this points and endeavor to write without confusion.— I have just returned from seeing a Nun made it was a very touching Ceremony.— She was a young Princess of great beauty— apparently 25 years old— The Church was very splendidly decorated and crowded with people— The mistaken girl (poor creature) appeared most gorgeously dressed in Jewels. Diamonds and the most costly garments— after a long sermon in the presence of the Cardinal in his beautiful dress— she left the church and re appeared at a Grating over the Altar— The Lady Abbess was with her and likewise some other nasty old Priests— She then went through the Catechism with a delicate pattering sonorous voice— after this the Abbess took off the Diamonds &c from her head and dress and then cut off all her hair— her beautiful hair— O! I felt as tho I was between the Scissors every time they closed.— She then had the Nun's Habit put over her— with a little silver Crown on her head— and so it ended— what a cruel and mistaken custom— she poor soul is now have been buried for ever in this cursed Convent.— Ah well a day— Longing to I will some day give you an account of one of these places which I have seen in company with an Italian Lady.— but now I must begin to write to Maria so when you have read out of your 2 pennyworth— farewell God bless you I long to see you— but I shant take you when I am coming— me answer me soon as you receive the letter— Good bye— Good bye my Brother Joseph